Tips for Service Providers Communicating with Students about Disclosure

Disclosure — *The Basics*

Disclosure is not a one-size fits all concept. *There is no one right way or right time to disclose a disability.* The student may not wish to disclose their disability (to an employer) and that is ok!

- "Disclosure" is the act of making disability known to others.
- Disclosure DOES NOT mean disclosing the nature/diagnosis of one's disability.
- It is a very personal choice that must be an informed decision.

The "Whether" — *Do I need to disclose?*

There is no legal obligation to disclose information about disability unless:

- It will affect the ability to perform the essential functions of the job.
- It affects the ability to work safely and to ensure the safety of co-workers.
- Accommodations are required to be successful such as an alternate interview arrangements, modified equipment or flexible working arrangements.
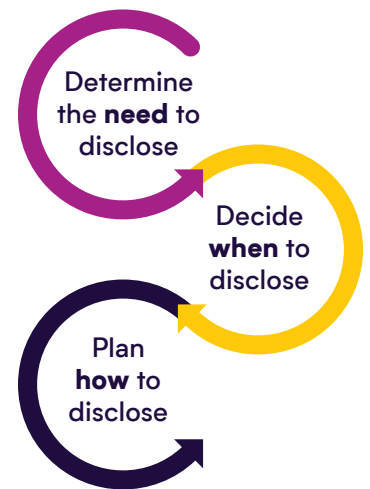
The "When" — *What is the best time to disclose?*

There are advantages and disadvantages of identifying the disability at different stages of the employment process, such as at the time of job application, before or during the interview, on job offer, after you start work or if a problem arises. Again, this is a personal decision. Please refer to the Tipsheet *"Tips and Considerations for Students when Disclosing a Disability to an Employer"* for more considerations of advantages and disadvantages at each stage

Determine the **need** to disclose

Decide **when** to disclose

Plan **how** to disclose

The "How"? — *What should I say when disclosing?*

Planning and preparing for a disclosure conversation is key! This can help students feel a sense of empowerment in their job search process. Consider the following:

- Provide positive examples of when challenges were overcome.
- Demonstrate, with examples, the skills gained from managing a disability.
- Prepare a brief disclosure script and rehearse it.

Tips for Students about Disclosure

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REFLECT	**DEVELOP**	**PRACTICE**	**APPROACH**	**REQUEST**	**COLLABORATE**
Strengths and abilities related to the position? Challenges and limitations related to the position or job duties that may be difficult to perform? Strategies, tools or accommodations used in the past that have allowed you to perform certain duties more successfully?	Using your answers to the previous questions, develop a **disclosure script** that frames your disability as an asset, highlights your abilities and clearly states your limitations and needs.	Using your script, practice saying your disclosre script in your head and out loud. You could also practice with a family member, friend or support staff at the Employment Support Centre or Centre for Accessible Learning.	Once you're comfortable, approach a trusted source, such as your Manager or Human Resources professional. They will respect the privacy of your information and be able to direct you to the right sources in the event you are seeking an accommodation.	Request your accommodation in writing and invite your Manager or Human Resources Manager to discuss it further.	Be open and willing to collaborate with your employer on your accommodation needs.

Disclosure Script

It is highly recommended that a script be prepared and rehearsed in advance. Use the following as an example:

"I have/am (highlight your strengths/skills/abilities/qualifications relevant to the job) and can perform the essential functions of this job, but sometimes (mention your limitations) might impact my ability to (describe the duties you may have difficulty performing). I work best when (describe the specific accommodations you need to support the duties you have difficulty performing)."

Materials adapted from the following sources:

Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario: Transition Planning Guide for Students with Learning Disabilities (2009)

Alberta Human Resources and Employment: Employment Series for Persons with Disabilities: Tips for Job Seekers

Algonquin College: Be the Boss of Your Career: A Complete Guide for Students & Graduates

Carleton University, Accessible Career Transitions (ACT) Program: Disclosure Script Worksheet

University of Guelph: Disclosure Script Handout